

to kill him off all at once
on the day of the Saturnalia,
my favorite holiday. No, no,
you rascal, this isn't the last
you'll hear of it. At daybreak
I'll run to the bookseller's shop
and gather together some Caesil,
Aquini, Suffenus, and all sorts
of similar nauseating stuff,
to repay you with such tortures.

Meanwhile, goodbye, be off
to wherever you dragged your dirty
feet from, you curses of the age,
you worst of all possible poets.

Catullus: 25

Girlish Thallus, you're softer
than rabbit's fur or goose down,
or an eartip, or even an old
dusty spiderweb -- and yet
more rapacious than a raging storm
or those divine bird-women
who swoop down with gaping mouths.

Give me back the cloak you stole,
and my handkerchiefs from Setabis,
and my ancient Bithynian pictures,
which you keep on display, you idiot,
as though they were heirlooms.

Unglue them from your fingernails
and let go of them right away,
or the burning whip will inscribe
ugly lines on your tender bottom
and soft little hands, and you'll toss
like a small boat caught in an angry
wind on the vast sea.

-- from the Carmina

-- Barriss Mills

West Lafayette, Indiana

